

EPI Update for Friday, July 31, 2015
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Tularemia on the rise in South Dakota**
- **Cilantro suspect vehicle in multi-state *Cyclospora* outbreak**
- **Public health response to fungal meningitis outbreak saved lives**
- **Lyme disease cases follow past trends, continue to be reported**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Tularemia on the rise in South Dakota

There have been seven cases of tularemia reported in the Black Hills area of South Dakota since June. Five of the seven cases were hospitalized. Other states in the region, including North Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado are also reporting increased cases. Although rare, the illness is endemic to Iowa, and 11 cases have been reported since 2004.

Tularemia is caused by *Francisella tularensis*, a bacteria that can be found in small animals in Iowa, such as mice and rabbits. Humans are infected via bites from infected animals, ticks, or deer flies. Contact with an infected animal's tissue or contaminated water, food, or soil can also lead to infection. Symptoms of tularemia may vary based on how the patient was exposed and can range from a sore where a bite occurred to severe respiratory illness.

To help prevent the spread of tularemia, remind patients to use insect repellent containing DEET, wash their hands after handling animal carcasses, and cook their food thoroughly. Any change of behavior or unusual symptoms in pets or livestock should be brought to the attention of a veterinarian.

For more information on tularemia, visit emergency.cdc.gov/agent/tularemia/faq.asp

Cilantro suspect vehicle in multi-state *Cyclospora* outbreak

On July 28, FDA issued an import alert for fresh cilantro from the state of Puebla, Mexico based on evidence indicating it as a suspect vehicle in the ongoing cyclosporiasis outbreak in Texas and Wisconsin. There have been 212 cases reported this year in Texas alone.

Iowa was involved in a large multi-state *Cyclospora* outbreak in 2013 associated with a salad mix served at restaurants. There were no cases reported in Iowa in 2014, but three cases have been reported this summer. Two cases report international travel, and the investigation into the third case is pending.

For more information on Cyclospora: www.cdc.gov/parasites/cyclosporiasis/index.html

Public health response to fungal meningitis outbreak saved lives

In 2012, the largest fungal meningitis outbreak in US history was linked to contaminated injections of preservative free methylprednisolone acetate (MPA) produced at a single compounding pharmacy in Framingham, Massachusetts. The product was shipped to 75 facilities in 23 states, potentially exposing 13,534 people to the pathogen.

According to a recent CDC article, of the 82 patients diagnosed with meningitis prior to the outbreak being controlled, 28% died. After the outbreak was widely publicized, the death rate among the 307 patients diagnosed with meningitis declined to 6%, a reduction of 22%.

Investigators estimated the aggressive public health action averted at least 3,150 contaminated MPA injections, 153 cases of meningitis or stroke, and 124 deaths. Patient notification and clinician outreach efforts by CDC and its public health partners (including public health officials in Iowa) likely saved lives by allowing health care providers to quickly diagnose patients and begin antifungal therapy.

For information, visit: wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/21/6/14-1558_intro

Lyme disease cases follow past trends, continue to be reported

Thus far in 2015, 120 cases of Lyme disease have been reported in Iowa (although some recent cases have not yet been entered into the data base). This is about the same number typically reported by this time of the year. Most of the cases have occurred in the eastern half of the state, matching the historical geographic distribution in Iowa. New cases continue to be reported, and this number is expected to increase as the summer progresses.

Lyme disease is best prevented by avoiding tick-infested areas. Those who spend time in such areas can prevent Lyme disease by using insect repellent containing DEET, wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants tucked into socks or boots, and by checking one's skin and removing ticks promptly after leaving these areas. If symptoms develop after being in a tick infested area, such as a bull's eye rash, contact a health care professional immediately.

For more information on Lyme disease, visit:

www.idph.state.ia.us/Cade/DiseaseIndex.aspx?disease=Lyme%20Disease

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy (and hotter) week!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology

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